Amendments to the Drawings

The words "Prior Art" have been added to Figs. 1-4.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet
Annotated Marked-Up Drawings

REMARKS

Claims 1-23 are pending in the application. Claim 1 is now cancelled.

The Examiner objected to the drawings. In particular, the Examiner indicated the view that Figures 1-4 should be designated by a legend such as —Prior Art— "because only that which is old is illustrated." Accordingly, Figs. 1-4 have been revised to include the legend.

The Examiner rejected claims 2, 4 and 6-8 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Regarding claim 2, the Examiner indicated the view that use of the phrase "at least two sites" in claim 1 renders claim 2 vague and indefinite when there are only two sites. The Examiner indicated a similar view concerning claim 4. With respect to claims 6-8, the Examiner indicated that the words CP4, CP9 and CP16 are vague. Accordingly, Claim 2 has been amended to recite "connecting three or more sites." Claim 4 has been amended to recite "connecting at least three sites." Claims 6-8 have been amended to remove the words CP4, CP9 and CP16, respectively. Reconsideration of the rejection under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 18, 19 and 23 were rejected as being anticipated by Rogers et al. (US6346964), Lai et al. (US6288740), Terui et al. (US6124881) and Loui et al. (US5764277) under 35 USC 102(b) or Nelson et al. (US2004/0008635) and Yona et al. (US2003/0123537) under 35 USC 102(e). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

The present invention provides for dynamically defining one or more conference parameters, e.g., composite image layout, based on the number of sites connected in a conference and/or the number of video signals received from the sites.

Rogers discloses conferences having different video mixes (Figs. 5, 8B; column 10, lines 12-25; column 13, lines 33-45). Lai discloses a video conference layout determined from voice activated selection using a fixed number of quadrants or regions (column 9, lines 15-36). Terui is directed to composite video that scales into regions based on information such as reducing ratio and display positions (Figs. 18A-18I and 17A-17F; column 8, lines 43-60). Loui relates to a system in which the number of users and the desired layout are determined at conference setup (column 5, lines 62-67; column 6, lines 1-22).

Nelson discloses that a layout may be generated for each participant dependent upon conference setting or number of participants (paragraphs 0053; 0060; 0063; 0065). Yona

discloses that a layout can be dynamically changed during a conference (see paragraphs 0033; 0050-0051).

The layout in Rogers is static and is not determined based on the number of connected sites or received video signals. Lai uses a fixed layout with only the sources in the mix changing based on voice activated selection. Terui provides no indication that the ratio is dynamic or is based on the number of sites or signals in the conference. The Loui system also provides a static layout once it has been determined at conference setup.

While Nelson indicates that layouts may depend upon the number of participants, there is simply no indication whether such layouts are capable of being dynamically changed during the conference. Yona fails to discuss how or on what basis the layout is dynamically changed.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the cited references do not teach the limitation "dynamically defining one or more conference parameters based on the number of sites connected in the conference and/or the number of received video signals" as recited in claim 18. Likewise, there is no teaching regarding the limitation "dynamically defining a composite image layout based on the number of sites connected in the conference and/or the number of received video signals" as recited in claim 23.

Claims 2-5 and 14-17 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rogers, Loui and Yona. Claims 2-8, and 14-17 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Terui. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Examiner indicated the view that, since Rogers shows a conference with 5 sites (Fig. 5) and a conference with 3 sites (Fig. 8B), it would be obvious to modify Rogers to change the composite layout such that when connected sites change from 5 sites to 3 sites, the composite image layout would change from Fig. 5 to that of Fig. 8B. There is simply no suggestion to dynamically define the layouts merely from the static layouts in Rogers. Likewise, the mere accommodation of up to 12 users in Loui does not suggest dynamically defining layouts upon sites or video signals connecting or disconnecting from the conference. As noted above, Yona is simply absent any details on how dynamic changes occur, and certainly there is no suggestion of changing the composite image layout upon sites or signals connecting or disconnecting from the conference. Terui does not teach dynamically changing the layout based on the sites connecting

or disconnecting from the conference - the cited Figs. 17A-17F are simply disclosed as different composing patterns, with no teaching of switching between or among them.

Thus, it is clear that none of the cited references teaches or suggests the limitation "redefining the composite image layout based on the number of sites currently connected in the conference or the number of video signals currently being received" upon either a connected site or video signal disconnecting from the conference (claim 2 as amended) or another site or another video signal connecting to the conference (claim 3 as amended). Claims 2 and 3 have been amended to each include the limitations of base claim 1 (now cancelled). None of the cited references teaches or suggests "redefining one or more conference parameters" upon a connected site or video signal being disconnected from the conference or another site or video signal connecting to the conference (claim 4 as amended). As to claims 5-8 and 14-17, the above remarks also apply.

Claims 9-13 and 20-22 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rogers, Yona, Loui or Terui in view of Downs et al. (US5894321) or over Nelson alone. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Examiner acknowledged that Rogers, Yona, Loui and Terui do not disclose the various parameters as claimed, and looks to Downs for teaching selection of a common denominator to ensure data is received at all endpoints. However, Downs does not add the element missing from Rogers, Yona, Loui and Terui of dynamically redefining conference parameters upon sites or video signals connecting or disconnecting from the conference. Thus, the combination of Downs with any of Rogers, Yona, Loui or Terui fails to suggest the claimed invention. The citation of Nelson for disclosure of a video transcoding method is also inapposite relative to the noted lack of dynamically redefining conference parameters in Nelson.

Claims 6-8 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rogers, Loui, Yona or Nelson taken with Terui. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner acknowledged that Rogers, Loui, Yona and Nelson do not disclose the various image layouts as claimed (i.e., four, nine and sixteen areas). However, as noted above, Terui does not add the element missing from Rogers, Loui, Yona and Nelson of redefining conference parameters based upon sites or video signals connecting or disconnecting from the conference. Reconsideration of the rejections is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that all claims are in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

HAMILTON, BROOK, SMITH & REYNOLDS, P.C.

By _____
Timothy J. Meagher
Registration No. 39,302
Telephone: (978) 341-0036
Facsimile: (978) 341-0136

Concord, MA 01742-9133
Dated: 10/20/05

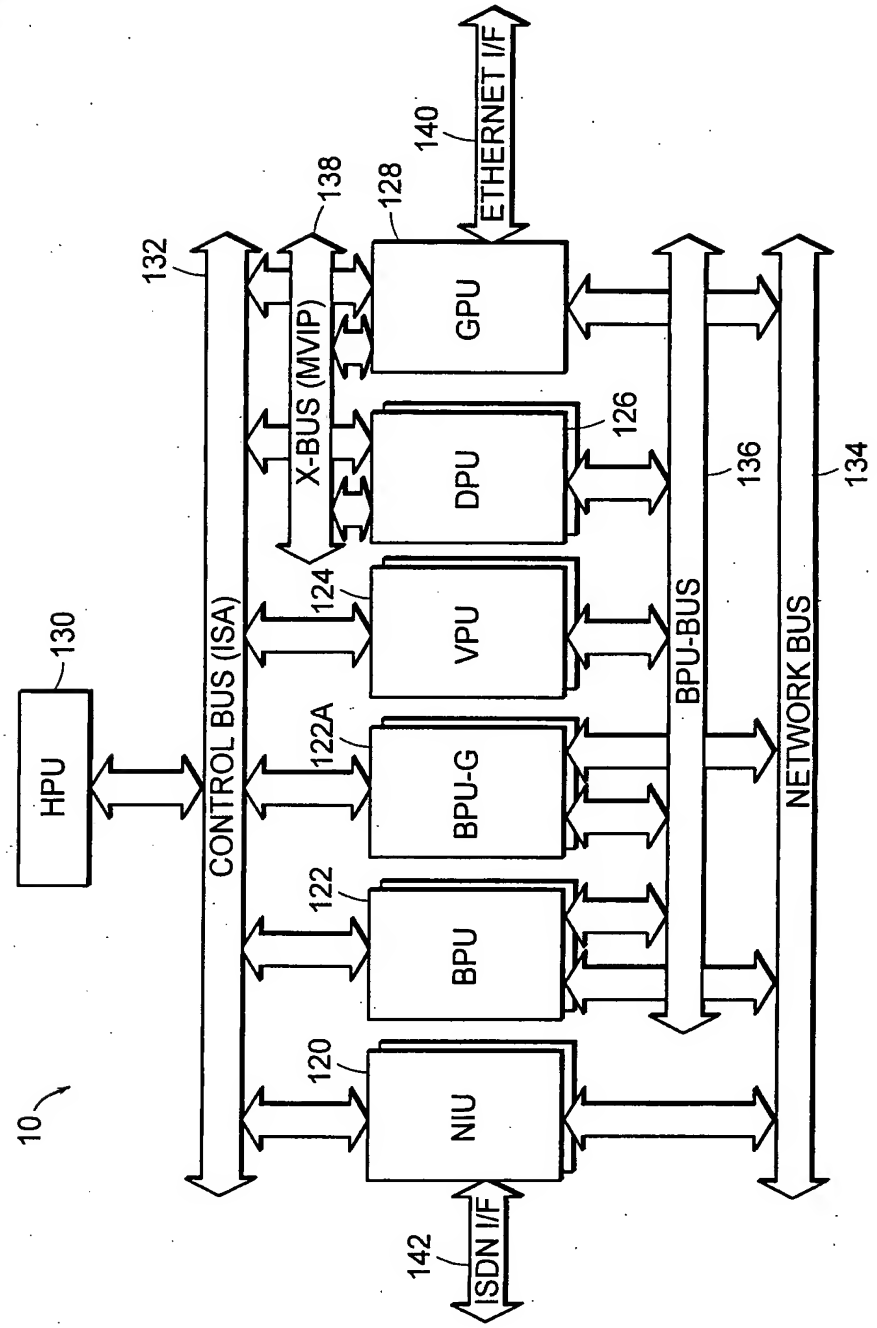

FIG. 1
PRIOR ART

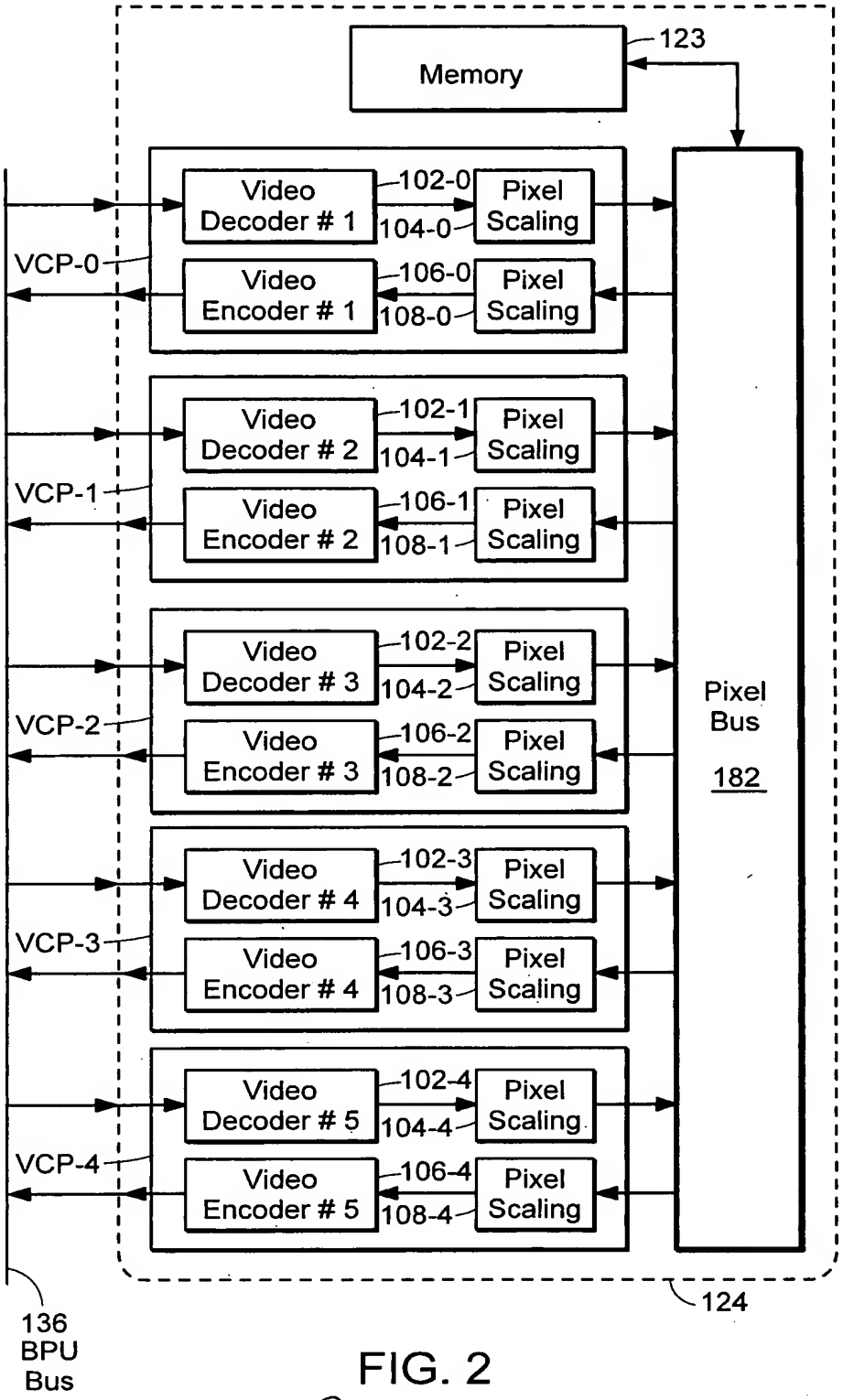

FIG. 2
PRIOR ART

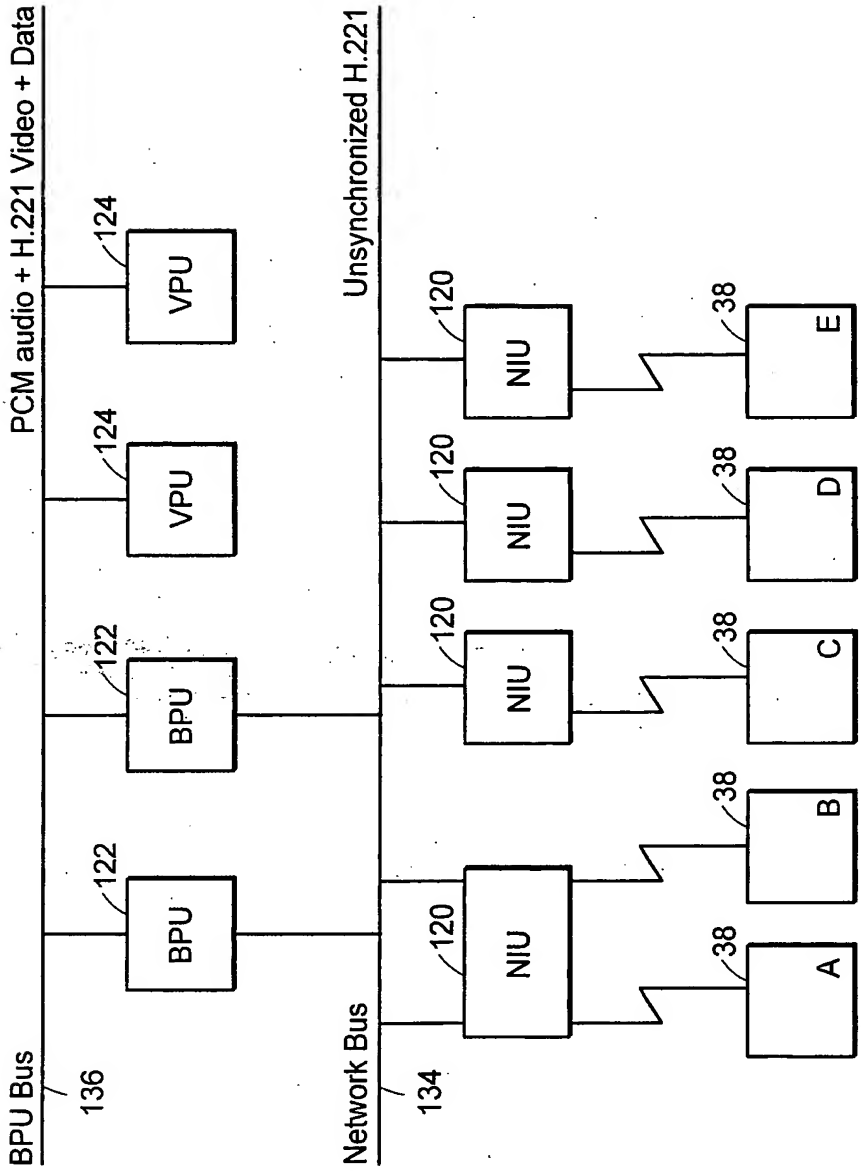

FIG. 3

PRIOR ART

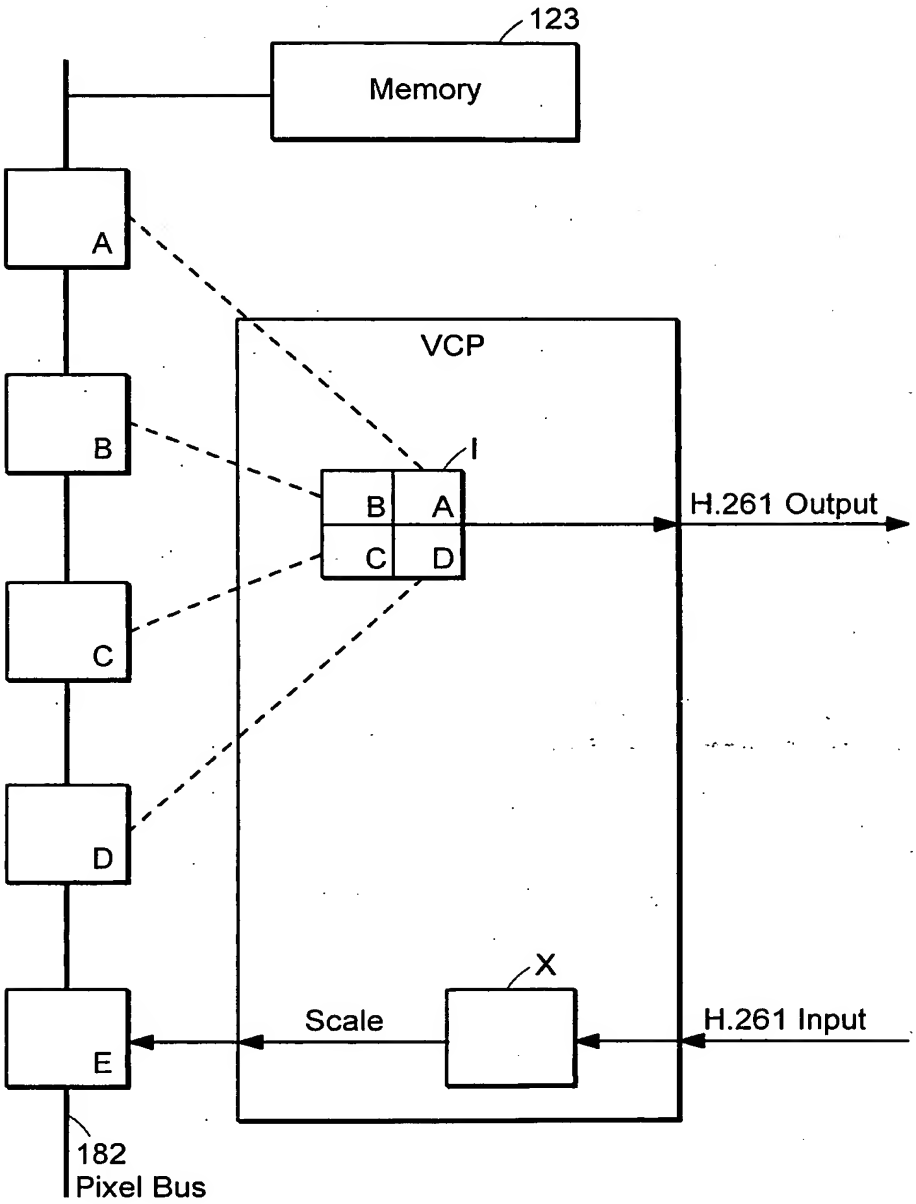

FIG. 4

PRIOR ART